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ABSTRACT

This study focuses upon Thomas Gordon's Teacher Effectiveness Training (TET) as it affects student attitudes. Of the 104 third, fourth and fifth graders who participated in the study, 48 were students of teachers who volunteered to participate in a TET workshop and agreed to use the TET model throughout the school year. The remaining 56 students (of teachers not trained in TET) served as a control group. In September, 1977, during the second and third week of classes all subjects were given the Battle Student Attitude Scale (BSAS) which consists of 60 items measuring attitudes toward self, other students, teachers, school administrators, and the school as a whole. Posttests on the BSAS were collected in March of the following year. Results obtained from anlaysis of the pretest and the posttest showed that students of teachers who used the TET in the classroom experienced an increase in positive attitudes toward school as a whole and toward their teachers in particular. (Author/MP)

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Teacher Effectiveness Training and Pupil Attitude

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Running Head: Teacher Effectiveness Training

ABSTRACT

Teacher Effectiveness Training is a packaged training program developed by Thomas Gordon and taught by personnel trained in the technique. In the following study, elementary students of teachers given Teacher Effectiveness Training, at the University of Florida, showed a significant increase in positive attitude toward school and their teachers over students whose teachers did not receive this instruction. Attitude was measured by the Battle Student Attitude Scale.

Student Attitude and Teacher Effectiveness Training

Apathy, indifference and absenteeism may well be student behaviors symbolizing the 80's the way student unrest characterised the 1960's. Along with dropping out of school, vadalism and violence, they express a lack of commitment to values held by those individuals who make up the school. Joining clubs, supporting school sponsored activities, and academic achievement, on the other hand, tend to be associated with positive attitudes toward school and these activities have lost in support and popularity. As educators we need to take a close look at how to improve attitudes and any program or methodology which can increase positive attitudes toward school and teachers should be encouraged.

According to Domico, Hines and Northrop (1975), an attitude is a "state or disposition to act toward an object. It has both direction and intensity" (p. 1). The student's attitude toward his teacher will influence how he accepts the information and values which the teacher presents in the classroom. The attitude will determine the direction of his behavior and the intensity of the attitude will determine the degree of positive or negative behavior. Modeling theory has shown that if a student has a positive attitude toward the teacher, he is more inclined to learn and model the behavior presented (Bardura, 1969).

Educators have long proposed alternative educational models they believed would influence attitudes. The more popular models have been those which reflect a democratically and experientially based (Dewey, 1916), student centered (Rogers, 1969) approach. One of the more recent student centered or democratic models of education is one proposed by Thomas Gordon (1974). It is a well defined, easily communicated approach which promises to foster independence, improve pupil attitudes toward teachers and school and enhance the self-concepts of students.

Thomas Gordon's Teacher Effectiveness Training (TET) is derived from a theoretical framework proposed by Rogers (1969) and Maslow (1959). The model is based on the belief that the capacity for positive growth is inherent within all individuals. Both Rogers and Maslow suggest that a "proper" atmosphere is essential if growth is to be fostered. Rogers (1957) in particular, has suggested that no matter what the helping relationship (counseling, teaching, etc.), a client's personal growth is brought about by the same specific behavioral interactions which are offered by a therapist within a therapeutic relationship, and that movement towards psychological health is accompanied by a positive change in attitude (1951). The behaviors which foster personal growth and psychological health are empathy, positive regard, genuineness and concreteness. A helping relationship that reflects these behaviors has been referred

to as the facilitative model. Several researchers (Aspy, 1969; Christinson, 1960; Heferle, 1971; Truaz and Tatum, 1966) have demonstrated a relationship between positive personality change and improved achievement on the one hand and the facilitative model on the other, when the model has been used in classroom settings.

Teacher Effectiveness Training is a program developed by Gordon for the purpose of training teachers in the use of the facilitative model. Included in the program is the development of such skills as affective communication and democratic problem solving.

The opportunity became available for the present researchers to study the effects of TET upon student behavior. A program was initiated at the elementary level of the University of Florida P. K. Yonge Laboratory School, where approximately one half of the faculty were instructed in Gordon's approach and the other half were not. The present study focuses upon TET as it affects student attitude.

The Study

Methods

Subjects. The sample of this study consisted of pupils enrolled at the laboratory school, grades three through five, from September 1977 to March 1978. Approximately one-half of third, fourth, and fifth-grade teachers at the school volunteered to participate in a TET workshop and agreed to use the TET model throughout the school year. All pupils of

teachers not trained in TET acted as control group subjects. Since classrooms at the school are equally divided according to sex, race, and socioeconomic factors, no attempt to randomize pupils on these variables was made.

Between the pre-and posttesting sessions there were some student dropouts and a teacher resignation. Therefore, the final groups from which the data were collected consisted of a teacher sample of three experimentals (three females, ages 56, 39 and 31) and three controls (three females ages 57, 37, and 29). All teachers had the same level of experience and education. The student sample consisted of 104 pupils, 48 experimentals and 56 controls.

Procedure

During the second and third week of classes in September of the new school term, all pupils in third, fourth and fifth grades were given the Battle Student Attitude Scale (BSAS) developed by Jean A. Battle (1954). The scale consists of 60 items which measure attitude towards self, other students, teachers, school administrators, and the school as a whole. Posttests on the BSAS were collected in March of the following year.

Results

Subjects in the study were given a pre- and posttest on the Battle Student Attitude Scale. Their responses to this measure were then submitted to an analysis of covariance.

A multiple regression program from the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (Nie, Hull, Steinbrenner, & Bent, 1975), a packaged computer program, was used to analyze the data. Since teachers in the study had not been radomly assigned, the pretest was used as covariance in order to account for shared variance between pre- and posttesting.

The present N of the experimental group equaled 49, with a mean score of 137.653 and a standard deviation of 16.541. The control group, although a larger N of 55, very closely matched these pretest scores with a mean score of 133.200 and a standard deviation of 16.071.

Posttest scores for the experimental group, with a slightly smaller number of subjects (48), reflected a mean score of 139.167, and a standard deviation of 19.109. Posttest mean score for the control group (N = 52) was 128.538 with a standard deviation of 16.117.

An analysis of the pre- and posttest data yielded a significant F value of 9.099 (p .05).

The only sub-scale which yielded a positive F value (5.935) was attitude towards the teacher which was significant at the .05 level.

Discussion

Students of teachers who used TET in the classroom experienced an increase in positive attitude toward school as a whole and specifically toward their teachers. These

findings are particularly interesting when we take into account those studies (Flanders, 1963, and Flanders, Morrison, & Brode, 1968) which show that positive student attitude toward their teachers and schoolwork tend to decrease during the school year (note that this did in fact happen with the control group in this study).

Rogers has stated that movement toward psychological health is accompanied by a positive change in self-concept and attitude. In a separate article the present investigators (1980) reported finding that pupils of teachers who practiced TET showed a positive change in self-concept. The present study shows that children in classrooms where teachers practiced TET reflected a positive change in attitude toward school and their teachers. This may lead us to believe that students in classrooms with teachers who practice TET will be psychologically healthier.

At the very least, however, maintaining the kind of caution necessary when delaing with a limited study such as this one, we may conclude that students in classrooms with teachers practicing TET will show a greater increase in positive attitude toward school and their teachers than those students whose teachers do not practice TET.

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